

Chapter; and director of Christian Education and Sunday School Superintendent for Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church.

He also currently serves on the boards of several organizations, including the University of South Alabama, the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission, the Mobile United Steering Committee, the Mobile Senior Bowl Committee, the MLK Redevelopment Corporation, the Mobile County Governmental Utilities, Mobile County Communication District, Volunteers of America, and Maritime Center of the Gulf of Mexico. He also serves as chair of the Metropolitan Planning Organization and is an emeritus member of the Community Foundation of Southwest Alabama.

Madam Speaker, I would like to offer my personal congratulations to Mayor Sam Jones for being named the Mobilian of the Year for 2008 and in so doing recognize him for his many outstanding accomplishments.

I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating a dedicated professional and friend to many throughout south Alabama. I know his many friends and colleagues join me in praising his accomplishments and extending thanks for his many efforts over the years on behalf of the city of Mobile and the entire state.

RECOGNIZING ZEIDERS ENTERPRISES CELEBRATING TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF BUSINESS

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 23, 2009

Mr. CONNOLLY of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the contributions of Zeiders Enterprises over the 25 years since its founding in Prince William County, Virginia. The more than 700 staff members of Zeiders Enterprises provide services and assistance to more than 1.5 million military and family members at nearly 50 military installations worldwide each year.

Zeiders employees serve in crucial roles as clinical counselors, victim advocates, new parent support specialists, financial counselors, transition specialists, and relocation specialists. Through these activities, Zeiders Enterprises has made a direct, positive difference in the lives of individuals, families, their communities, and the organizations in which they serve. Especially noteworthy is the role that Zeiders plays in supporting the special needs of military service members and their families. Zeiders Enterprises is a founding sponsor of The Quality of Life Foundation, whose mission is to honor and serve our severely injured combat service members and their families by helping them face the life-changing challenges unique to their situations.

Employees at Zeiders contribute outside the workplace through extensive volunteer service.

This volunteer support of the American Red Cross, Peace Corps, local schools, youth development programs, mentoring programs, victim advocate programs, youth sports programs, community orchestras, volunteer fire and rescue departments, and military service in National Guard and Reserve occurs in Prince William County, Virginia, and across the nation where Zeiders employees live and work. The consistent contributions of Zeiders employees to the communities in which they serve are truly impressive.

A culture of public services emanates from the top of the Zeiders Enterprises organization. Michael Zeiders, president and CEO, serves the citizens of Prince William County and Virginia as an active member of both the Northern Virginia Workforce Investment Board and the SkillSource Group Board. Under his leadership, Zeiders Enterprises is an active partner in the community. Additionally, Mr. Zeiders has supported families of Wounded Warriors nationwide through the Quality of Life Foundation.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join with me today to congratulate Zeiders Enterprises on its 25th anniversary and to pay tribute to the significant contributions its employees have made in improving the lives of our brave men and women who serve this great country.

AUTHORIZING PILOT PROGRAM FOR PATENT CASES

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 17, 2009

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 629, the "Patent Judges Pilot Program in Certain District Courts." I urge my colleagues to support this bill. This bill will provide more expertise in skill in a difficult area of law: patent law. Americans hold the patents and patent law as important, integral to our very lives. Patents reward ingenuity and creativity.

As the Blackberry litigation demonstrated, deficiencies in the current system have the ability to paralyze America. Indeed, the New York Times noted that "[something] has gone very wrong with the United States patent system." The Financial Times opined that "[i]t is time to restore the balance of power in U.S. patent law." Indeed, there has been a cry for change in the patent system and increased expertise for many years now.

The Constitution mandates that we "promote the progress of science and the useful arts . . . by securing for limited times to . . . inventors the exclusive right to their . . . discoveries." In order to fulfill the Constitution's mandate, we, as Members of Congress, must

examine the system periodically to determine whether there may be flaws in the system that may hamper innovation, including the problems described as decreased patent quality, prevalence of subjective elements in patent practice, patent abuse, and lack of qualified persons to study patent law.

H.R. 628 attempts to correct some of these problems.

H.R. 628 creates a pilot program to increase the expertise of U.S. District Court judges who wish to hear cases that involve issues related to patents or plant variety protection. The bill provides for the designation of not less than 6 United States district courts in at least 3 different circuits to take part in the pilot program. In the designated courts, judges who elect to hear patent or plant variety protection cases will be designated to do so by the chief judge. Cases will be assigned randomly, but undesignated judges may decline to accept patent and plant variety protection cases. The bill authorizes the expenditure of not less than \$5 million per year for up to 10 years to pay for the educational and professional development of designated judges, and for compensation for law clerks with technical expertise related to patent and plant variety protection cases to be appointed by the designated courts.

The high cost of patent litigation is widely publicized. It is not unusual for a patent suit to cost each party upwards of \$10 million. Appeals from United States district courts to the Federal Circuit are frequent, in part because of the perception within the patent community that most district court judges are not sufficiently prepared to adjudicate complex, technical patent cases. In 2008, 45 percent of the patent cases that were appealed to the Federal Circuit were reversed in whole or in part or vacated and remanded. This bill seeks to promote consistency among United States district courts by increasing the expertise of district court judges, thus providing for more certainty in intellectual property protection.

Taken together, these improvements would bring the American patent system up to speed for the twenty-first century. Instead of remaining a hindrance to innovation and economic growth, the patent system should work for inventors, ensuring America's patent system remains the best in the world and prevents risks to innovation.

I am encouraged by this bill, and I am hopeful that minorities and women take advantage of this pilot program. The patent judges pilot program and pilot program for law clerks provides for the educational and professional development of the designated district judges in matters relating to patent and plant variety protection, and for compensating law clerks with expertise in technical matters arising in patent and plant variety protection cases. This is yet another step that America is taking to ensure that its patent system is the best in the world. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.